



I.M.O.H.C. & S.

ANTWORT ODER SENDSCHREIBEN
 AN DIE VON GOTT ERLEUCHTE BRÜDERSCHAFT VOM
 ROSENKREUTZ:
 AUFF IHRE FAMAM UND CONFESSION
 DER FRATERNITET.

ANSWER OR LETTER
 TO THE BY GOD ENLIGHTENED FRATERNITY
 OF THE ROSE CROSS:
 TO THE FAMA AND CONFESSIO
 OF ITS FRATERNITY.

1630

translation:

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SOURCE

1603, Antwort oder Sendtschreiben - I.M.O.H.C.

<http://www.archive.org/details/antwortodersens00irwigoog>

PREFACE BY THE TRANSLATOR

In 1614, 1615 and 1616 there appeared in Germany the renowned works *Fama Fraternitatis*¹, *Confessio Fraternitatis*² and the *Chymische Hochzeit Christiani Rosenkreutz*. These documents made reference to the existence of the Rosicrucian Order in Europe and were succeeded by a declaration that was attached to the walls in Paris in 1623. Its contents were as follows.

"We, the representatives of the Highest Council of the Rose Cross reside visibly and invisibly in this city, at the grace of the Most High, to the heart of which the righteous turn. Without books or signs we speak, and this we learn to others as well, in all the languages of the countries where we want to stay, to liberate the human beings, our equals, from deadly errors.

If ever someone wants to meet us out of sheer curiosity, he will never make contact with us. However, when his will urges him to have himself registered in the file of our Fraternity, then we, who can see through thoughts, shall show him that we truly keep our promises. Thus we do not state the location where we reside in this city, because the thoughts added to the genuine will of the reader will enable him to get to know us, and us to get to know him."

Afterwards many writings have seen the light, *pro* and *contra* the Rosicrucians. There is yet another, third type of writing, namely the open letter, in which a person who is interested in the Order makes a public appeal to the Rosicrucians to contact him and take him up in their Fraternity. In this sense this type of

¹ *'Fama fraternitatis Roseae Crucis* oder 'Die Bruderschaft des Ordens der Rosenkreutzer', Cassel, 1614.

² *'Confession oder Bekandnusz, der Societet und Brüderschafft R.C. An die Gelehrten Europae'*, Cassel, 1615.

writings can also be counted to the writings *pro* the Rosicrucians.

The present work, the *Antwort oder Sendschreiben an die von Gott erleuchte Brüderschafft vom Rosenkreutz: auff ihre Famam und Confession der Fraternitet*, can be designated as one of the latter types of writings which as to tone and contents are written in support of the Order.

As is the case with so many comparable apologies, this Answer as well is punctuated with Christian metaphors, with which God is often invoked. I want to stress that A.M.O.R.C. is no religious organization. The writers of the apologies however have time and again sought and found their own manners of demonstrating their adherence to the Order. But the symbolism that they have introduced with this, as a matter of fact must not be confused with the working method or points of view of the Order itself.

The author in an enigmatic way also makes reference to a friend in Strasbourg, who serves him and is obedient to him. It is not certain to whom he actually refers. The *Chymische Hochzeit Christiani Rosenkreutz*, 1519, was published in Strasbourg by the way.

One hallmark that this document shares with many other ones, is that the author at the close of his argumentation announces why he keeps his name a secret. The anonymous author actually signed it all with five letters on the cover: I.M.O.H.C., and with three letters at the end: B.I.C. And yet, just before the end he yet gives as an address: I.I.W., with which the enigma is complete.

The phenomenon of abbreviations is also seen with several other Rosicrucian apologies, as with the *Sendtschreiben oder*

einfeltige Antwort an die hocheleuchte Bröderschafft desz hochlöblichen ordens desz Rosen Creutzes auff die von ihnen ausgefertigte Fama und Confessionem der Fraternitet (Open letter or uncomplicated answer to the highly enlightened Fraternity of the highly laudable Order of the Rose Cross to its published *Fama* and *Confessio* of the Fraternity: C.H.C., 1615); with the *Einfältige und kurze Antwort über die ausgegangene Fama und Confession* (Uncomplicated and short reply to the published *Fama* and *Confessio*: Philippo à Gabella, also C.V.H., 1615); with *Ein wolgemeyntes Antwortschreiben an die hochwürdigten und weitberühmbten Herrn Brüder desz hochpreiszlichen Rosencreutz-Ordens* (A well-meant reply letter to the highly worthy and widely famous gentlemen Brothers of the highly estimable Rosicrucian Order: S.V.S.P., 1619); and with the *Sende-Brieff an die von Gott hocheleuchtete und begabte der Natur verständige sehr vortreffliche Hn. Hn. des Decemvirats der Fraternität des sogenannten Rosen-Creutzes* (Letter to the very laudable Ten gentlemen, very enlightened by God, talented, proficient in nature, of the Fraternity of the so-called Rosicross: I.N.J., 1705).

There is a remarkable historical aspect regarding this work. In 1694 Rosicrucian settlers crossed the Atlantic Ocean in the ship Sarah Maria, under the leadership of Johannes Kelpius, Master of a Rosicrucian Lodge in Europe. Landing in Philadelphia, the colonists established their first settlement and later moved further west in Pennsylvania to Ephrata. Yet the cover mentions Philadelphia as the origine of this production, but it is dated 1630.

Ruud Muschter³

³ Member of the Grand Council of the A.M.O.R.C. (Dutch-speaking Jurisdiction) from March 21st 1988 to March 21st 2010.

ADDITIONAL PREFACE BY THE TRANSLATOR

As can be read on the website of A.M.O.R.C. (www.rosicrucian.org), Rosicrucians went to America from Europe in 1694. At that moment the Sarah Maria sailed to Philadelphia under the direction of Johannes Kelpius, where these R.C.-colonists established their first settlement. With this finding the history of the Rosicrucians in America seems to have started in 1694. To my great astonishment however, the Rosicrucians seem to have been active in America much earlier. The translation of the mentioned work I had already completed in 2012, but only recently it dawned to my that the original can actually have a considerable, historical meaning. The fact is that the title does continue with the phrase “Formulated and published by a true lover of the secret wisdom in the Sixth Degree [the original gives ‘Gemeind’, which in the context can only indicate ‘Degree’] in Philadelphia. In the year 1630”. And with that the presence of the Rosicrucians in America suddenly seems to slide back with 64 years. In howfar does this mean an undisputable conclusion that the Rosicrucians were in America even before 1694, and what does this implicate? In principle any document can be given a certain date. This however is no guarantee for authenticity. So, the fact that in the document the year 1630 is stated cannot be conclusive for establishing its age. Looking at the framing, there are in this document many similarities with other pro-Rosicrucian documents from the beginning and middle 17th century. The whole build of the apology fits in a well-known pattern. Moreover in these works we see the ancient tokens for sz and tz being used, whereas in the onset of the 18th century there widely was a more modern rendering of this group of letters. This seems to indicate that we deal with a work from the 17th century. But it does not constitute a conclusive proof. If we take it for granted that the document does not have its origin in 1630, does it mean there we see a forgery here? Only forensic investigation might shed

light on this. Also we can have a mistake at our hands in the rendering of the year. With that the document still could very well be very old, and be made around 1630. But this does not explain the great difference between 1630 and 1694. We also must put the question who could have an interest in falsifying such a work. Had the word 'Philadelphia' not been in the title, then the falsifying would already be an enigma, because no motive can be concocted for it. Had it been the intention of a forger to shift the history of the Order back in time, one might minimally expect that he would have given publicity to the date in combination with the reference 'Philadelphia', and this has not happened. And then why would the year '1630' have been chosen, and not an even earlier date? It also is unclear how the consciously projecting of a wrong year could have had a significant meaning with regard to the initial phase of the Order in America. But, continuing our reasoning we must read the title of the document also in relation to the author, who claims to have been in the Sixth Degree. Then the beginning of the Order should even lie further back in time. For first of all the Order should have been established in America. Next there should have been established an infrastructure, and members should have been given the opportunity to assemble. After that, a time would arise in which Degree Initiations could have been held. And going through them up and to the Sixth Degree would again require a considerable time period. Of course I have informed the Grand Master and the Supreme Grand Lodge of my findings.

Ruud Muschter

THE COVER

Answer
or
letter
to the by God enlightened Fraternity
of the Rose Cross:
To the Fama and Confessio
of its Fraternity.

Formulated and published by
a true lover
of the secret wisdom in the Sixth Degree⁴
at Philadelphia.

In the year

1 6 3 0.



I.M.O.H.C. & S.



Printed in the year 1630.

⁴ "Gemeind". In the context this can be equated with a Degree.

BROTHERS IN JESUS CHRIST, ELECTED BY GOD THE ALMIGHTY. To you be my heartfelt greeting. I wish and affirm that you be granted both temporary and eternal well-being.

After I had laid my hands on your small writing in the year 1629, namely the Fama Fraternitatis - the contents of which I have read with extraordinary joy and attention and have considered with Christian understanding - I found such a wisdom in it, that I as an illiterate layman found it to be much too ambitious for me, which I want to recognize sufficiently. Whilst in my youth I had obtained through nature and also through the mercifulness and goodness of the All High a great longing for the truth and also preserved it, I have obtained en acquired even more through the Fama that has been spread by you. In particular because it has always and constantly instigated and stimulated me to read the Holy Scripture. As I have found your request and desire⁵ to be not only very reasonable, but commendable and Christian as well, I have been obdient to them at once, and after having invoked the divine grace and support I have obtained such an understanding and wisdom, that - if it would be possible that I have to live many thousands of years here in this world; would lie upon my knees all this time; would be lauding and praising God early in the morning and late at night - I still would not be able to thank him sufficiently for the tiniest welfare.

You, o worthy men and dear Brothers R.C.⁶, I have not wanted to address, because at this moment I deem myself still unworthy to reveal to you my unpretentious person. I even have been iwilling to postpone it even further, in order that I - when I would come to you, would not be empty, but enlightened with the fullness regarding God and with all sorts of mental blessing.

⁵ The appeal as contained in the Fama Fraternitatis.

⁶ "R.C.", 'Rosae Crucis': 'of the Rose Cross'.

A very short time after this I have been able to lay my hands on a writing, produced by you, in which you very much complain that you are so lonely, whereas you would warmly endure and have fellow actors, if only they would not make themselves unworthy to that. You also state how you offer them all your treasures free and mildly, as has sufficiently been stated in your Fama and Confessio.

Thus I, signatory, the simplest of all our Brothers and true followers of the impoverished life of Christ, have no longer been able to restrain myself. The great internal love has inflamed my heart to such an extent that I can no longer bridle such a fire, nor can and will soften it in me. On the contrary I want to let it out and also inform you about some of it, in order that through all of this I might all the more get the praise of God the Almighty. And with this I consider by myself, that now it is the time - as you yourself state and heartily wish with me - that the seven thousand who did not worship Baäl⁷, nor have bent their knees before him, must come forward. Yes, even more the forty-four thousand⁸ who have kept victory over the animal and

⁷ Generic term for 'lord' amongst the gods. "And I will leave for myself seven thousand men in Israel, whose knees have not been bent before Baal, and every mouth that has not adored him, kissing hands." Bible, I Kings, 19:18.

⁸ "And I heard the number of those who were sealed: one hundred and forty-four thousand sealed, out of every tribe of the sons of Israel." Bible, Revelations, 7:4. "And I saw, and behold, the Lamb was standing above mount Zion, and with him were one hundred and forty-four thousand, having his name and the name of his Father written on their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of a great thunder. And the voice that I heard was like that of singers, while playing on their stringed instruments. And they were singing what seemed like a new canticle before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders. And no one was able to recite the canticle, except those one hundred and forty-four thousand, who were redeemed from the earth.

its image, his mark and the number of his name⁹. They stood with the Lamb on mount Zion and have had the name of their Father written on their foreheads. It are they, who are not tainted with women, for they are virgins and they follow the Lamb wherever it goes. These have been bought from the human beings to be the first-fruits of God and the Lamb. In their mouth no malice is found, for they are immaculate before the seat of God. Then under joyful resounding one will sing this song: Prepare yourselves, have yourself be enlightened, for your light is approaching, and the splendour of the heart goes upon you. Just see, darkness covers the earthly realm and obscurity the clouds. But over you the heart will come up and its splendour will appear above you. The heathens will run after your light, and the kings after your shine, which comes up with you. Raise your eyes and look around you. All these will assemble with you and come to you. Your sons will come from afar and one will bring your daughters by a rope. You will see and be enlightened. Your heart will be astonished¹⁰ when the fullness of the sea is coming to you and when the power of the heathen comes to you. So there will be gladness, joy and merriment, because the heathens as well have seen the divine light in the darkness, the shine of which so many years was hampered with blackness by the outer tastelessness elimositer¹¹ from penetrating to the black letter. God be praised on his

These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are Virgins. These follow the Lamb wherever he will go. These were redeemed from men as the first-fruits for God and for the Lamb. And in their mouth, no lie was found, for they are without flaw before the throne of God." Bible, Revelation, 14:1-5.

⁹ The author refers to the Beast mentioned in Revelation, and its number, 666.

¹⁰ "entsetzt": 'appalled'. Considering the context however, a positive translation is required here.

¹¹ It is not clear what is intended here.

highest throne that the elimositic¹² curtain from the top up to the lowest part has been torn apart exactly from the middle, so that one is able to see inside the holy part of the sanctuary now, and able to serve God in a righteous way in the spirit of wisdom, with a heart that has been wholly cleansed in the right manner. Which now will and has to be revealed.

What say you however, o you worthy men of God and true inhabitants of the Heavenly Jerusalem, how should I have behaved any longer towards you; I, who after the forging of the Saturnal night¹³ - with which you have tried¹⁴ to send out your Fama - was still enclosed in the mother body? However, now I am still in my best youth, as the lovely and graceful rays of the very beautiful aurora of the more than heavenly wisdom have broken through. What do you think that I will say one more time?

**vermeinet ihr? Wann der Tag / der Tag der freuden / der Tag des Herren /
welches Morgenröthe schon vorhanden ist / der Tag auff welchen sich alle
Propheeten vnd Apostel des Herren so herzlich gesehnet / vnd ihre auser-
begehrt haben: Ja auff welchen Tag sich Abraham / Isaac / vnd Jacob /
samt allen Patriarchen erfreuen werden / wie sie dann in ihren Testamen-
ten ihren Kindern bezeugt haben: Ja dieses wird seyn der Tag / auff welchen
wir / die wir die letzten / die ersten sein werden / zuersehen den Groschen von
dem Himelischen Hausvater / vnd als dann werden die Engeln gesellt / vnd
werden sich darauff setzen die / die nicht angebetet hatten das Thier noch
sein Bild / vnd nicht genommen hatten sein Malzeichen an ihrer Stirn /
vnd auff ihrer Hand. Vnd sie werden Priester Gottes vnd Christi sein / vnd**

When it is the day; the day of joy; the day of the heart, of which the aurora is already present; the day that all the prophets and apostles of the heart were heartily looking forward to and which

¹² Id.

¹³ Principle of earth and death.

¹⁴ "er[s/f??]en". The original for the main part is unreadable.

they would like to see¹⁵; yes, the day on which Abraham, Isaac and Jacob will rejoice together with all the patriarchs, of which they bear witness in their testaments to their children; yes, then this will be the day on which we, who as the last ones will be

¹⁵ Compare the underneath poem contained in the Chymische Hochzeit Christiani Rosencreutz, 1519, one of the most important Rosicrucian publications.

"Dies ist der Tag, dies ist der Tag
für den, der zur Königshochzeit kommen mag.
Bist du dazu geboren,
von Gott zu Freud' erkoren,
magst auf den Berg Du gehen,
auf dem drei Tempel stehen,
und dort das Wunder sehen.

Sei wachsam,
erforsch Dich selbst bedachtsam.
Wirst Du nicht in Reinheit dich baden,
wird sicher die Hochzeit Dir schaden.
Wer sich nicht wäscht von Sünden,
den wird man zu leicht befinden."

- - -

This is the day, this is the day
for him who may go to the royal wedding.
If you are born for it,
have been joyfully chosen by God,
you may go up the mountain,
on which stand three temples,
and there behold the miracle.

Be vigilant,
examine yourself carefully.
If you not bath yourself in purity,
it is certain that the marriage will be detrimental to you.
He who does not wash off his sins,
will be considered to light a burden.

the first ones, will receive the coin¹⁶ from the heavenly pater familias¹⁷. Then the seats are placed. Those will sit down on them, who have neither worshipped the animal nor its image, and have not taken his brand on their forehead and their hand. They will be the priests of God and Christ, and reign a thousand years with him. On which day I will wake up with many others to be a whole man in Jesus Christ, my saviour.

I thank my God, through Jesus Christ, that you are everywhere, o you apostolic men, and that in many countries your faith has become public. God, whom I serve in my thoughts, is my witness that I always remember you. And I pray that I am allowed one thing now, namely that I may come to you and may behold your countenance. It must not be denied that I live with you in my mind constantly and unceasingly, and through that have acquired many of your treasures in a short time. However there might be some amongst you - and I do not doubt this - who might mean that my humble writing directed to you, has only been drafted for the purpose of realizing great wealth or otherwise vain honour and other comparable desires. To them I answer that - although I possess no big stocks of temporary goods - the things which I daily need for my sustenance are to many already. I try to find the right location and the fitting

¹⁶ "Groschen". "A similar blackness as with Saturn is also shown by the lead. Hence that Agadimon writes in the Turba: 'Cook the ore until it arrives at its blackness. The philosophers call it a coin. Mix the parts of our work well, then the blackness will quickly turn into white, which is the Saturn of the philosophers, and the lead.' In their books much is written about this. With it fits the maxim of Emiganus: 'When the splendour of Saturn has thrown itself into the air, nothing appears but a blackness.'" Michael Maier, Chymisches Kabinet, Explanation XII. The Turba regards the Turba Philosophorum, The assembly of the Wise, The LXVIIe dictum. Alchemical work with dialogues, 12th century A.D. Possibly drafted earlier by Archelaos, teacher of Socrates, 5th century B.C.

¹⁷ 'father of the household'.

opportunity to give it away, tuned to my vocation, on the ground of which it has been ordered to me. For I do not seek the richness of this world, rather than great poverty, through which I - praise be the Most High - acquire such an affluence, that I do not only have enough in the time that I live, but am also able to make others share in it. I now ask you however, animal ones¹⁸, what do you think: how can, or how would it have to be possible, that somebody who has a heart, which is above anything contained in the whole world, next submits himself again to the modest creatures and in an improper fashion makes himself submissive to them? Whilst you, animal ones, who do not possess the wisdom of God, yet do not understand anything else but what you can distinguish by touching and grasping it. So it is my opinion, that - as you do not know nor recognize anything - it must also be a hallmark of something else¹⁹. But you are in the same situation as a blind person, who might want to persuade the people to say that there is no light and only darkness, and this because he never beholds such a light. Now what do you mean, you animal ones, what kind of an answer would he get? I leave this on the table for your consideration.

Now I would like to turn to you, o you worthy German Brothers, and together with you enjoy in humility and love all your treasures, of which you possess such a vast quantity and which hopefully will never get exhausted. Yes, with you of the Sixth Degree at Philadelphia, if it might only please God that he allows it me now. With all my heart I look for it and I desire it, so that together with you I may hear the joyful voice of the one who says²⁰: "Since you have kept the word of my patient

¹⁸ The author no longer addresses the Brothers.

¹⁹ "müsse es mit andern also eine beschaffenheit haben." 'Beschaffenheit' has many meanings.

²⁰ The German text does not mark the quotation. The text follows the text of the Bible, with one small exception. Therefore I have inserted the text as given in the Bible. Bible, Revelation, 3: 10-12.

endurance, I also will keep you from the hour of temptation, which shall overcome the whole world in order to test those living upon the earth. Behold, I am approaching quickly. Hold on to what you have, so that no one may take your crown. Whoever prevails, I will set him as a column in the temple of my God, and he shall not depart from it anymore. And I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem that descends out of heaven from my God, and my new name."

O, which depth of richness and wisdom of God. Who can tell which works he performs for the children of mankind? God, you Eternal and Almighty one, with what can I thank you for all the good that you have granted me? Because look, everything that I have, is yours. However I want to thank you, o God, through yourself and through that which you have given me, and want to praise you in yourself and in Jesus Christ, your Son, my saviour, who is the genuine royal roby and the noble, shining carbuncle. From him one learns, that he is a fiery snake and glows in the dark; is an outright medicine for all bodies; changes imperfect metals in the best gold; and lifts all illness, fear, need and sorrow of the human beings.

Thus, o you wise Brothers R.C., let your magnet²¹, of which you have made an account in your aurora²², now also proof its

²¹ Unclear what the author refers to. In the *Chymische Hochzeit Christiani Rosencreutz*, in *The Second Day* there is talk of a magnet. It is about Christian Rosen Creutz who is invited to the royal wedding and goes on his way. He arrives at cross roads, where a magnet will pull him in the right direction.

²² Supposedly the author refers to the rise of the Order through the *Fama Fraternitatis*. There is no specific Rosicrucian document with the name Aurora, but I do not consider it impossible that the author refers to a work of Jakob Boehme, 1575-1624, *Aurora oder Morgen-*

power. For look here, here is iron. This shows, when it has been pulverized by true humility, that it can be attracted by a knife, provided it has been touched with the right magnet. Similarly, where your iron is, one not only sees part of the magnet, but the mountain itself, which not only attracts the iron, but also whole ships full with all kinds of goods that are tipped with it²³. O, if I only were Jacob. How I would like to serve another seven years for the fair Rachel²⁴. For if I consider how the previous time - for which after all I have got nothing back in return but Lea, who had a very ingenuous²⁵ face and by no means was as perfect as Rachel -, has gone by as swift and as if it is one day, then why should I not with all my heart serve once again these seven years because of this fair one who, although she is unfruitful, will yet have more children than the one who gives

röte im Aufgang (The Day-Spring or Dawning of the Day in the East), 1612.

²³ Compare: "One might ask: what kind of a sea might this be? To this I answer: the Erythrean or Red Sea, lying under the Tropic of Cancer and in which one often finds magnets, so that it is quite hard to sail past them with ships in which there is iron. Because then they go under and go to the dogs." Michael Maier, *Chymisches Kabinet*, Explanation XXXI, 1708.

²⁴ In the following the author extensively paraphrases the Biblical story about Rachel. In it it is described how Jacob spent seven servile years with Laban, the father of Rachel: a precondition to be allowed to marry her afterwards. His father-in-law to be however did not stick to his word and offered him Rachel's less beautiful sister Lea for a bride. Again Jacob spent seven years with Laban in servitude, after which he finally was allowed to marry Rachel. Initially she appeared to be sterile; her sister Lea got many children. Yet later Rachel got children herself. Bible, Genesis, 29: 1-35; 35: 16-20. Jeremiah, 31: 15.

²⁵ "welche Lea doch sehr blöd von Gesicht." The word 'blöd' has many meanings in German, like 'dumb', 'stupid', but also 'childlike' and 'innocent'. In theology the interpretation of the original word in the Bible is still subject to discussion. Translation uncertain.

birth to them? This however is the one²⁶, who is in the way in the street, who walks to and fro before the gates and at the entrance to the city, under the tower where one walks in and out. "To you", o you men, does she speak, "I call. To you, o worrying human beings²⁷, I raise my voice. O you thoughtless ones, take notice of it. O you foolish ones, take care that your heart becomes reasonable. Hear me, for I want to freely open my lips and utter royal things. For my throat is diligent in the truth, and my lips abhor the impious ones. All my statements are just; there is nothing bent or wrong in them. They are all easy to understand, and uncomplicated to those who obtain knowledge. Therefore accept my punishment as silver, and the knowing as the pure gold. For wisdom is more costly than pearls. Yes, all the things that human beings are focussed on may not be compared with it. Soon I shall have wisdom living with me, and the knowledge of prudence am I. With me is godliness²⁸ and I flee from evil. Also pride and arrogance, evil intent and a wrong, harmful mouth I hate. With me is announcement²⁹ and a bright utterance, prudence and courage. Through my suffering the kings rule; through me the kings make just laws. I love my lovers, and he who looks for me diligently, will find me. I have well-being and honour, cordiality, firmness and justice. My fruits go beyond gold and gems, and my yearly income is more costly than silver. I walk the way of righteousness and I enter the road of the just. I am disposed to make my lovers rich and to realize their treasures. Therefore listen to me, o my sons, for they who pay attention to

²⁶ It is not certain to whom the author now refers. At any rate the utterances can hardly be attributed to Rachel or Lea. It is not certain by the way whether he intended to give here a quotation in the true sense of the word. Nor is it marked by quotation marks.

²⁷ "O ihr Arbeitseligen Menschen." In old High German, 'Arbeit' has the meaning of 'problematic' or 'suffering'.

²⁸ "Forcht desz Herren". Also: 'godfearing'.

²⁹ "Anschlag".

my running water, I shall make blissful. Hear the warning and become wise. Do not be indolent and lazy. He fares well who heeds me, who guards before my doors and simply has his tent at the gates of my doors. And he who finds me, he finds life. To him happens the grace of the heart. He however who turns against me, damages himself. And he who hates me, loves death³⁰."

This is the graceful Rachel, with whom I have now engaged and joined in my flowering youth, yes, whom I love more and more and pursue ever farther. I steal behind her, wherever she goes; I look into her room and listen at her door. I am looking for an inn near to her house³¹ and against her wall erect my little cabin. To me it is a good hostel. My children will be under its little roof and stay under its foliage. Under it I am protected against the heat, and to me it is a pleasant abode. However, I do this because I fear the Lord and like to abide by Gods word. This is why I have found her. And she has approached me as a mother and has received me as a young bride. She has fed me with the bread of reason, and refreshed me with the water of wisdom. They will make me strong, so that I can stand on my own. I will stick to her, in order that I may not be disgraced. She will raise me above my fellow-creatures, and will open my mouth in the community³². She will crown me with joy and delight, and endow with an eternal name. But the fools do not find her, and the impious ones cannot see her, for she stands far away from the high-minded ones, and the hypocrites know nothing about her. To you however, o worthy men R.C., it is given to know the secret of the Realm of God, but for the others it is just in

³⁰ Here the quotation ends.

³¹ "Hansz". A slip of the pen for "Hausz".

³² "Gemeine". I consider the term 'community' fitting here; in the context of the cover however 'degree' is better, as I have already indicated.

allegories, in order that they do not see it, despite of their seeing; and not understand it, despite of their hearing it.

Therefore my meek and humble request and longing goes out to you, that you will take up and accept, as well as possible, my writing that must be considered small, and - with that - that you regard and weigh the Christian brotherly love and intention, rather than the graceful word³³. However, as concerns my name, and next the location where I find myself at this moment, I have not stated them for certain reasons. But to you they are sufficiently revealed, to whom the thoughts of all human beings are not hidden.

You should also know however, that besides God I have my best en most trusted friend living in Strasbourg, whom initially I found nauseating and to whom I was opposed. However, he is very obedient to me now and makes it known that at all times he is at my service. Through that you yourselves, orally through a message from my side, will be able to sufficiently learn about him. As far as it might please you to send out a written answer, you can have it forwarded to me along all channels, with which the address is: I.I.W., devoted to painting, but still unmarried. So in comforting hope I shall see if you - on the basis of your innate goodness en kindness - will let me experience an answer and have it sent to me again. Therefore take me, poor one, up in your cordial prayer. I request the All High from the bottom of my heart, that he does come up the good which his mercifulness has sowed in me. May it bear fruit in me a hundred-, sixty- or even thirtyfold. Only him we should give renown, praise, honour and thanks, now and in all eternity, amen.

³³ "W[?]t". The work is almost unreadable here, but the context makes it clear. Translation uncertain.

The one heartily favourable to you

B.I.C.

THE END